





Rejoice always, **pray without ceasing**,  
give thanks in all circumstances; for this  
is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

**INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD**

3806 Monument Ave., P.O. Box 6767  
Richmond, VA 23230-0767

© 2017 International Mission Board, SBC

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

PRAY

---

**SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN PEOPLES**



Every day people around the world wake up and say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit." Yet they do not know what tomorrow will bring, for what is their life? They are like a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes (James 4:13–14).

In these pages you will get a broad overview of the lives of people in Sub-Saharan Africa. You will see where and how they live. You will read about who they worship and what they fear. You will be offered a chance to join with others and pray for nations to have access to the gospel soon.

Time is not in our hands, but it is in God's sovereign hands. May these people hear and believe the gospel of Christ in their lifetime.

- 1 HUMAN NEEDS**
- 2 RELIGIONS**
- 3 URBAN AREAS**
- 4 THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**
- 5 TRAINING PARTNERS**
- 6 YOUTH**
- 7 UNREACHED PEOPLES**

This guide contains seven themes to help you pray for the peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa. We encourage you to gather with friends or small groups to pray for each need. It is designed to be used at your own pace. You could meet monthly, weekly, or even seven days in a row.

It is our hope that as you pray for countries and people around the world, your hearts will grow together in a desire to see Christ exalted in your own community and among the nations.



# HUMAN NEEDS

HIV/AIDS, clean water, orphans, malaria, and Ebola are having a devastating impact on Sub-Saharan Africa. These issues are often associated with Africa, and Africa is often associated with these issues, which often leaves Africans with a sense of hopelessness. However, these issues, while grave and severe, are opening

doors for Christians to share the gospel. Christians meet the needs of Africans suffering from such problems through human needs projects such as clean water wells, orphan care programs, and job creation. These projects provide opportunities to demonstrate and communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.

---

Discuss how human needs across Africa open doors for the gospel to be communicated and bring hope to the hopeless.

---

**Pray for believers to effectively obey the Great Commission as they show great compassion to Africans who feel hopeless, by not only meeting physical needs, but spiritual needs as well.**



## RELIGIONS

Sub-Saharan Africans are very spiritual people who acknowledge spiritual forces at work in the world around them and try to appease or manipulate these powers through prayers, charms, sacrifices, and divination. According to research, 21 percent of the population is Muslim, 36 percent is Christian, and 40 percent is animist. In reality, regardless of one's religious affiliation, animism

influences the hearts and minds of most Sub-Saharan Africans, leading to a clash of beliefs that is difficult to overcome in everyday life. Although they turn to religions such as Islam or Christianity to help them answer big questions like, "Where will I go when I die?" they look to African traditional religion to solve day-to-day problems, like poor health or relationship conflicts.

---

Discuss why it's difficult for Americans to understand how an African Christian could continue to consult a witch doctor or sacrifice to his ancestors. Christians in the Bible faced similar temptations to stay in their old way of life. Read Ephesians 4:17–24. What cultural norms or expectations today might be keeping us from living a life that is fully committed to Christ?

---

**Pray Sub-Saharan Africans will surrender and commit their lives fully to him and not depend on works or sacrifices.**



## URBAN AREAS

Chaotic traffic, historic landmarks, high-rise buildings, driven entrepreneurs, bustling economies, dense populations, young innovators, leading exporters—is this Africa? Although these descriptions may seem more fitting for cities like New York, Rio, or Mumbai, this is the new reality for a continent known for elephants, safaris, and tribal living. In fact the imminent urbanization

of Africa is expected to be the fastest in human history. Worldwide, 2.5 billion people will migrate to cities over the next forty years, and 90 percent of that migration will be in Asia and Africa. Currently, Sub-Saharan Africa is home to two megacities (ten million or more) with three more expected to emerge by 2030 (Dar es Salaam, Johannesburg, and Luanda).

---

Discuss what enters your mind when you think about Africa. A hut? Safari animals? A village? How does the urbanization of Africa affect your perception of this continent? How might God use this phenomenon to bring people to himself?

---

**Pray for wisdom for effective strategies to reach Africa's urban centers. Pray for this generation of Africa's church to produce gospel-centered doctors, lawyers, teachers, entrepreneurs, engineers, theologians, and more.**

# 4

## THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Mission work in Africa finds itself at a historical crossroads. The days of pioneer missionaries engaging unreached peoples in every corner of the continent are gone. Although Africa still needs a small number of brave souls in remote places, one of Sub-Saharan Africa's greatest needs is in the classroom. Various false teachings, especially the prosperity

gospel, are widespread. Theological educators are needed to help church leaders establish a strong foundation in the truth and accuracy of Scripture. Strong and sound teaching will help the African church move toward a future when they will be the next wave of missionary advance to carry the global church across the finish line.

---

Discuss how the large number of theological educators in the United States could be mobilized to teach and train the African church.

---

**Pray that African theologians would hold fast to the inerrant Word of God and proclaim it boldly and wholly across Sub-Saharan Africa.**

# 5

## TRAINING PARTNERS

If Africa is going to be reached with the gospel and experience the hope of Christ, then African believers need to play a pivotal role. They need to be disciples who make disciples, and they need to be undergirded by the global church. Missionaries are training national believers in how to be effective disciple makers, focusing on rightly handling the Word of God.

God is also raising up African Baptists—individuals, churches, and conventions—who are eager and ready to engage Africa with the gospel. We have the opportunity to invest in mobilizing these leaders through vision casting, training, and partnering toward the common goal of making Christ known.

---

Discuss how the church in the United States can effectively partner with the African church to share the gospel most strategically while utilizing the experience of missionaries who have dedicated their lives to studying African language and culture.

---

**Pray for strong, interdependent relationships between missionaries and national partners that result in numerous partners focused on the Father's heart for the lost.**



## YOUTH

Seventy-five percent of Sub-Saharan Africa is below the age of twenty-nine. That means that three out of four people in Sub-Saharan Africa hold the future of their nation in their hands. Every year, scores of them move to the cities to study at universities, which leads them to migrate from the animistic false religion of

village life to the hedonism of the big city. With no solid spiritual foundation, their future and the future of the nation hangs in the balance. Christian leaders are working to reach these students with the gospel and hope to raise up a new generation of leaders in their countries.

---

Discuss what Africa would look like twenty years from now if God began a revival in the hearts of the young people today.

---

**Pray for African university students to respond to the gospel, form churches, and transform the future of Africa.**



## UNREACHED PEOPLES

It's hard to imagine that a person could never hear about Jesus Christ. Are there really places with no Christians, no churches, no Bibles, no Christian radio stations? The heartbreaking reality is yes. There are twenty-four million people in Sub-Saharan Africa with no access to the gospel. They are segmented into 448

distinct ethnic groups, which means 448 languages and cultures. Many live in fear and try to earn God's favor by following the tenants of Islam, or they consult witch doctors to try to appease spiritual powers. They have no concept of a God who loves them and wants to have a relationship with them.

---

Discuss what it will take for the twenty-four million lost people of Sub-Saharan Africa to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

---

**Pray for the Father to open the spiritual eyes and ears of people who need the truth. Pray they will have opportunities to hear and understand the gospel.**

Thank you for joining us in praying for the peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Did you know we have 8 more prayer guides for the other peoples of the world?

To download a FREE copy visit:

[imb.world/PrayerGuides](http://imb.world/PrayerGuides)





Rejoice in hope, be patient in  
tribulation, be **constant in prayer.**

—Romans 12:12

